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A study to ascertain factors responsible for the establishment and closing of public junior colleges in the United States since 1940, the degree to which factors of maximum importance are present or absent in Massachusetts, and whether or not these factors account for the absense of an appreciable growth of public junior colleges in Massachusetts.

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SOME FACTORS SIGNIFICANT IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC JUNIOR COLLEGES IN THE UNITED STATES (1940-1951): WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MASSACHUSETTS

- Stanley F. Salwak -

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Statement of the Problem

The primary purposes of this study may be broken down into specific problems as follows:

1. What are the underlying factors or reasons responsible for the establishment of public junior colleges in the United States since 1940?

2. To what degree are the factors of maximum importance present or absent in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts?

3. Can an answer be obtained, within the limitations of the study, to the problem of whether or not the factors account for the absence of an appreciable growth of public junior colleges in the Commonwealth?

4. What are the main reasons responsible for permanently closing public junior colleges in the United States since 1940?

5. What is the nature of public sentiment in regard to the establishment of public junior colleges in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts?

Procedures

Several techniques were used to obtain some of the answers to problems (1), (2), and (3) above, namely: (a) an analysis was made of previous nation-wide studies pertaining to the purposes or factors related to the growth of public junior colleges; (b) an investigation was made of additional library resources for literature pertinent to the problem; (c) a tentative factor list, derived from the sources mentioned in the items (a and b) above, was then documented by means of direct quotations taken from the publications of fifteen authorities representing secondary education, and the junior and senior college levels of education; (d) a jury, consisting of eleven junior college specialists, analyzed and evaluated the factor list and added factors which it felt warranted inclusion in the final revision; (e) a revision of the factor list was made after the jury evaluations were received, and the factor list was then submitted to the administrators of those public junior colleges established during the years 1940-1951. The administrators were asked to rate each factor by a numerical sequence ranging from a maximum importance of 1 to little importance of 4 with the symbol 0 reserved for those factors which did not operate in the establishment of their junior colleges; (f) the factor judged as most important by the administrators of the public junior colleges was then applied to Massachusetts to find out whether or not it was present in the Commonwealth. Using this information, the writer was able to come forth with conclusions regarding the important question: "Is this factor of maximum importance related to the present dearth of public junior colleges in Massachussetts?"

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In handling problem (4), the author used the U. S. Office of Education Education Directory, Part 3, Higher Education, for the years 1940-1952, as one source to gather information on the number of such institutions which closed. To provide a basis for an additional check on the number of such institutions which closed during the years covered by this study, the author referred to the 1940, 1948, and 1952 editions of the reference volume American Junior Colleges, published by the American Council on Education. The next step involved sending a letter to Commissioners of Education in those states which showed at least one public junior college closing during the period of this study. The Commissioners were requested to list the reason or reasons which were responsible for permanently closing these institutions.

Data was obtained to answer problem (5) through the use of questionnaires sent to and personal interviews held with presidents of parent-teacher associations, presidents and managers of industry, and presidents of public and private junior and senior colleges. The questionnaires were intended to ascertain: (a) the general knowledge of these groups about public junior colleges; (b) the desire of these groups to get additional information about public junior colleges; and (c) their interests in higher education.

Findings

From the Factor Study (Problems 1, 2, 3)

1. A total of eighty-seven public junior colleges, in twenty-three states, were reported to have been established since 1940, according to the January, 1952, Junior College Directory. A total of fifty-two of these institutions first began to function during the years 1946-1948.

2. Seventy-nine of the eighty-seven public colleges on this level participated in the factor study. Replies received from seventy-seven of these institutions were used in the study.

3. Responses were received from institutions located in each of the nine geographic divisions of the United States: New England (2), Middle Atlantic (12), East North Central (7), West North Central (5), South Atlantic (7), East South Central (2), West South Central (10), Mountain (7), and Pacific (25).

4. The financial inability of youth to attend existing institutions of higher education was found to be the most important factor responsible for the establishment of public junior colleges during the period 1940-1951. Forty-seven, or more than 61 per cent of the seventy-seven public junior college administrators assigned a rating of 1 (maximum importance) to the factor. Looking at the replies from another point of view, a total of seventy-two or 93.5 per cent of the administrators said that this factor was of average or greater importance as a reason for the establishment of their institutions. In addition, only five or 6.5 per cent of the administrators gave little or not any recognition to this factor.

5. Relative emphasis on the second ranking factor, the desire to establish an opportunity for a short course and two-year terminal programs

of post-high school education, was considerably less as evidenced by the fact that only twenty or about 26 per cent of the administrators considered it to be of maximum importance as an operative factor. Twenty-four or more than 32 per cent of the administrators considered the factor to be of little or no importance.

6. The desire to extend upward the public secondary school to include a preparatory program equivalent to that offered during the first two years in senior colleges and universities, was third; then the need for workers skilled to perform operations in industry on the semi-professional level, followed by the employment gap or the inability of youth graduating from high schools to secure positions in industry. The desire to extend democracy by lengthening the period of educational opportunity ranked sixth, followed by the willingness of the people to support public junior colleges, the geographic remoteness of existing institutions of higher education, community pride, demand for a program of general education, the belief that junior college students receive more individual attention, adult demand for educational opportunities, and the desire of parents to keep their children at home for two more years.

7. Factor 14, the need for vertical integration; factor 15, acceptance of the practice of going to college as part of the American mores; factor 16, pressure from state and/or other universities; and factor 17, the conversion of four-year institutions, received meager attention by the administrators. Factor 17 is eliminated as an operative factor inasmuch as seventy-four of the administrators gave it little or no importance as an operative factor.

8. One new factor, the provision of higher educational facilities for returning World War II veterans, was listed by seven administrators as most important. The fact that these administrators come from institutions located in the New England, Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, and Pacific geographic divisions, insures its positions as a nation-wide factor.

In review, then, sixteen of the seventeen factors contained in the original factor list, plus the additional factor of providing higher educational facilities for returning veterans appear to be the factors which operated and influenced the establishment of public junior colleges during the years 1940-1951.

9. Four of the factors determined are products of the years since 1940. These are: the demand by industry for workers skilled on the semi-professional level; the need and demand for implementing a program of general education; the demand of adults for additional opportunities for adult education; and the provision of higher education opportunities for returning veterans of World War II.

10. In the application of the factor of financial inability of youth to pursue a program of higher education to Massachusetts, one finds that at least 41 per cent of the families in Massachusetts have annual incomes of less than $3,000 and find it almost impossible to send their children to a typical private institution of higher education in Massachusetts. When one considers the high cost of attending such institutions, even those youth who have scholarships and commute to college find it difficult to attend college. This conclusion holds even for those youth coming from

families with annual incomes between $3,000-$5,000.

11. On the basis of the evidence presented in the study, the factor of financial inability of youth to pursue a program of higher education exists in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, although not quite to the extent that it exists in the nation as a whole.

12. The evidence also leads to the conclusion that the factor of financial inability does not account for the dearth of public junior colleges in the Commonwealth.

Reasons Responsible for Permanently Closing Public Junior Colleges During the Years 1940-1951 (Problem 4)

Thirty-two public junior colleges in nine states were permanently closed during the period of this study. This is discussed in detail in the dissertation.

Findings from the Opinion Survey (Problem 5)

This phase of the study involved the use of two questionnaires. One questionnaire was sent to each of fifty-seven presidents of public and private junior and senior colleges and universities in Massachusetts as listed in the following reference volumes: American Junior Colleges, 1952; and American Universities and Colleges, 1952. The other questionnaire was administered to presidents of parent-teacher associations and presidents and managers of industry.

Replies were received from thirty-one presidents of higher educational institutions. Of these, twenty-seven replies were used in the study. The number of parent-teacher association presidents and managers and presidents of industry participating in the study numbered seventy-two and ninety-five, respectively.

In general, the presidents of both public and private colleges and universities feel: (1) the higher educational needs of certain youth have been neglected; (2) there is a need for making a survey to determine what these educational needs are; (3) there should be a study to determine whether or not public junior colleges should be established in Massachusetts to meet the needs of certain youth; (4) that their support would be given to legislation for establishing public junior colleges on a statewide basis if the need for such a plan is shown; (5) that their support would be given to legislation which provides for state funds to subsidize such junior colleges if the need is shown; (6) they would approve the practice of accepting transfer students with advanced standing to senior colleges and universities if these students were adequately prepared; (7) that from 20 to 30 per cent of all high school graduates could profit from a four-year program of higher education; (8) that an additional 22.5 to 29 per cent of the remaining high school graduates could benefit from some post-high school education of less than four years in length; (9) that a tuition fee between $150-$220 should be charged by public junior colleges if they are to be established; (10) that establishment of public junior colleges would reduce the freshman and sophomore enrollment in senior institutions of higher education, and increased enrollments would result

in the upper two years; and (11) that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is making only a fair or poor attempt toward providing higher education opportunities for youth and adults.

Conclusions

The principal conclusions drawn from the facts presented were these:

1. The financial inability of youth to pursue a program of higher education is the most important factor, based on the frequency of mention of the public junior colleges administrators, responsible for the establishment of public junior colleges during the years 1940-1951.

2. The factor of financial inability exists in Massachusetts for those college-age youth coming from at least 41 per cent of the families in the Commonwealth. These families have annual incomes of less than $3,000.

3. The factor of financial inability does not account for the dearth of public junior colleges in Massachusetts.

4. An overwhelming majority of the college going youth from Massachusetts come from families having annual incomes above $3,000.

5. Higher educational facilities under public control have been meagerly developed in Massachusetts. It appears that the existing public institutions of higher education have grown up with little attempt to work out a program to meet the needs of larger numbers of youth.

6. Little recognition has been given by local communities in Massachusetts for post-high school education on the junior college level.

7. Massachusetts has the per capita wealth but is not extending the effort to provide higher educational opportunities which are equivalent to states with similar per capita wealth. The high per capita wealth coupled with its large adult ratio per person 18-21 years of age should enable the Commonwealth to support a higher educational program more adequately than it is now doing. In this regard, Massachusetts would not have to extend itself as much as a majority of the other states in order to get the same results.

8. The presidents of both public and private junior and senior colleges in Massachusetts are, in general, sympathetic to the public junior college movement and favor a survey to determine whether public colleges should be established in Massachusetts.

9. A very insignificant number of presidents of parent-teacher associations and presidents and managers of industry have an understanding of what the junior college is and what its functions or purposes are.

10. Although Massachusetts ranks high in the proportion of its college-age youth attending colleges and universities, when looked at from the standpoint of its heavy urban population, its advantageous geography, the large concentration of institutions in heavily populated urban areas, and

its comparative high per capita wealth, the number of youth going to college is not so impressive.

11. Before support comes from the citizens of Massachusetts for public junior colleges, it appears that there will have to be a distinct change in public opinion. The present sentiment held by presidents and managers of industry does not present an encouraging picture, and, it continued, might seriously hamper any attempt to establish more junior colleges under public control.

12. The presence of old and well-established universities in Massachusetts appears to be one deterrent in the establishment of public junior colleges in Massachusetts. The prestige value of these institutions has built up a tradition among the citizens which will be difficult to overcome.

Recommendations for Further Study are made in dissertation.